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(71) Applicants
Interplay Electronics
Limited,
4 Meadow Close,
Goostrey, Gloucestershire

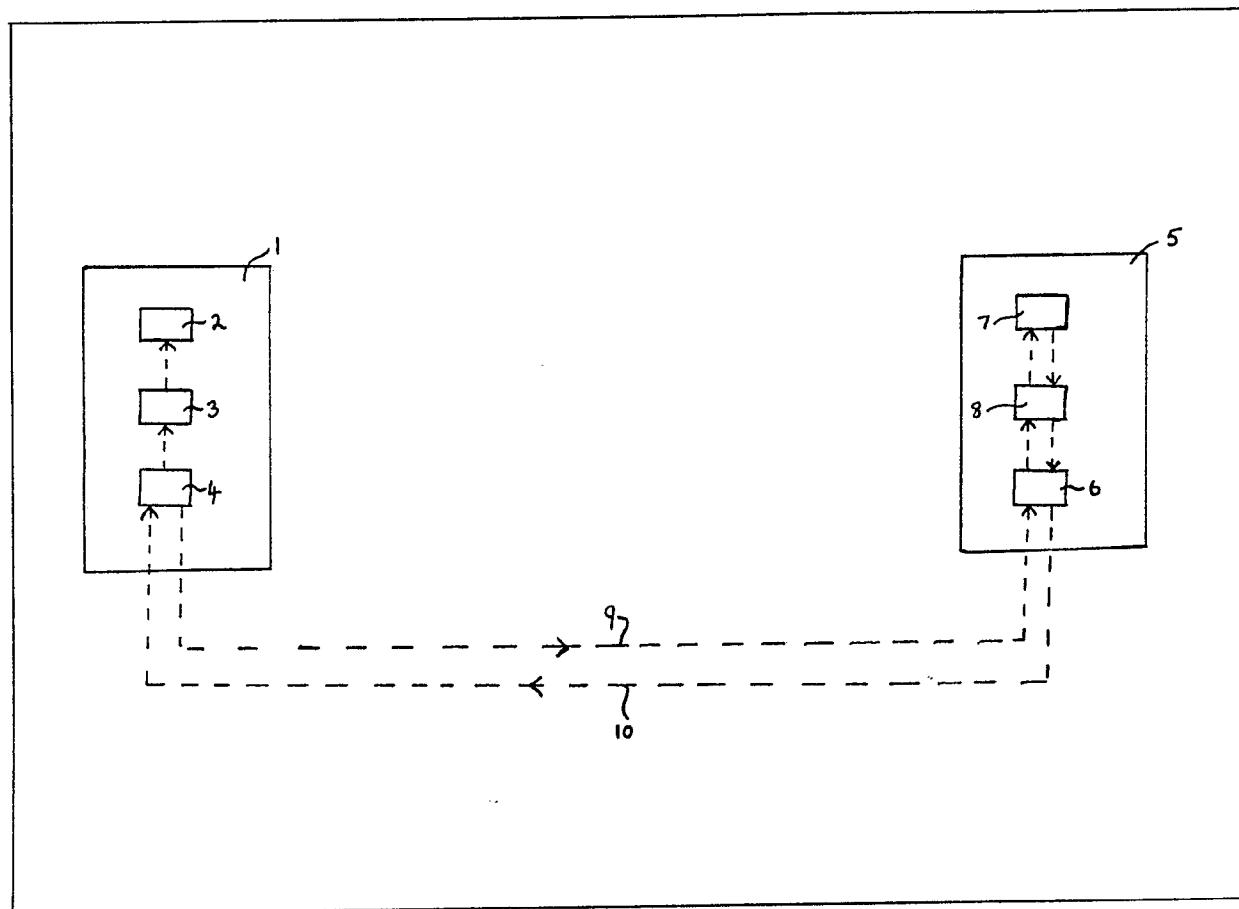
(72) Inventors
Brian James Morrissey,
Peter David Crowe

(74) Agents
Haseltine Lake and Co.,
Hazlitt House, 28
Southampton Buildings,
Chancery Lane, London
WC2A 1AT

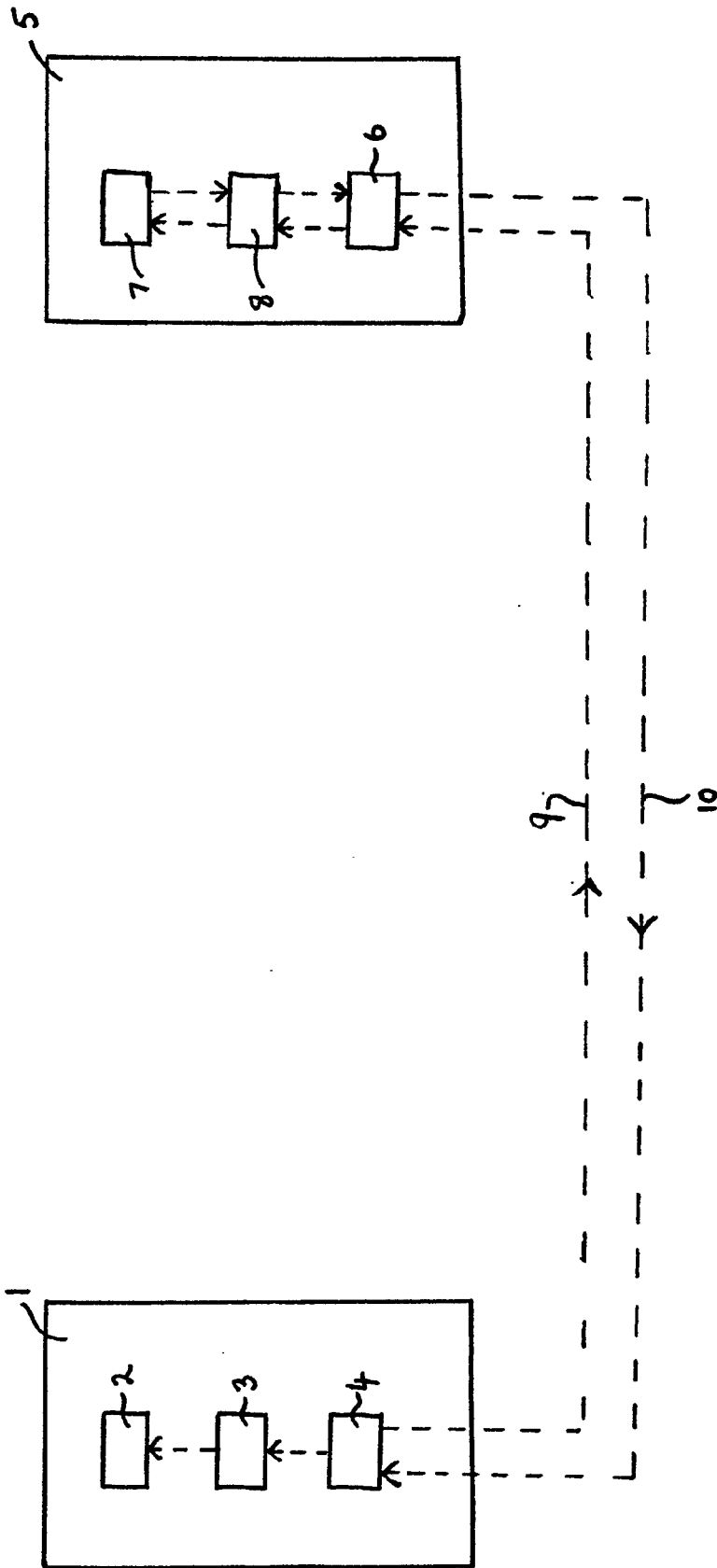
(54) **Modifying a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance which includes a computer**

(57) A method is disclosed of modifying game characteristics of a machine (1) for playing a game of skill and/or chance which includes a computer. The method comprises feeding data from another computer (5), in which is stored data relating to

a game, the method being such that the machine stores data whereby the said game can be played on it. The method is used to change a first game which can be played on the machine, by feeding data from the other computer relating to a game which is different from the first game, whereby instead of data relating to the first game, the machine stores data relating to the different game so that it can be played on the machine. The other computer stores data relating to a plurality of games, the method comprising selecting one or more of these games and feeding data to the machine relating thereto, whereby the machine stores data relating to the or each selected game, so that the latter can be played on the machine.



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SPECIFICATION

Modifying a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance which includes a computer

According to this invention, there is provided a method of modifying game characteristics of a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance which includes a computer, the method comprising feeding data from another computer, in which is stored data relating to a game, the method being such that the machine stores data whereby the said game can be played on it.

The method may be used to change a first game which can be played on the machine, by feeding data from the other computer relating to a game which is different from the first game, whereby instead of data relating to the first game, the machine stores data relating to the different game so that it can be played on the machine.

Preferably, the other computer stores data relating to a plurality of games, the method comprising selecting one or more of these games and feeding data to the machine relating thereto, whereby the machine stores data relating to the or each selected game, so that the latter can be played on the machine. In this case, the other computer could be interrogated for the purpose of selecting one or more games.

Communication between the machine and the other computer could be by way of a local connection therebetween, the machine and computer being adjacent one another; or by means of a telephone line or other communication link between the machine and the other computer, the machine and the other computer being remote from one another; or by means of a telephone line or other communication link between the other computer and a further, link computer and a telephone line or other communication link between the link computer and the machine, the machine, the other computer and/or the link computer being remote from one another; or by means of a programmable device which has received data from a further, link computer which communicates with the said other computer via a telephone line or other communication link, the device being adjacent the machine and the link computer and/or the other computer being remote from the machine.

The machine could, for example, be a machine of the type in which a plurality of reels bear indicia around their peripheries, stopping of the reels after random rotations with predetermined combinations of symbols in line resulting in wins; or it could be a machine for playing a game on a video unit; or it could be a combination of these kinds of machines. The machine could be based in a home.

This invention also comprises a computer in which is stored data relating to a game, the computer being programmed and adapted for use as the said other computer in a method according to any of the preceding paragraphs.

This invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the single figure of the

65 accompanying drawing which shows, schematically a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance and an associated computer.

Reference 1 denotes a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance which includes a computer for controlling the game or games which can be played on the machine. Such a machine could be, for example, a machine including a plurality of reels which bear indicia around their peripheries, stopping of the reels after random rotations with different combinations of symbols in line resulting in wins (such as a so-called "fruit" machine); or it could be a video machine for playing a game of skill on a video unit; or it could be a combination of these kinds of machines.

Hardware in the machine 1 includes game playing hardware 2 (such as reels and a reel driving mechanism or a video unit), game storage hardware 3 in the form of a non-volatile memory in which is stored data relating to and for controlling the game or games which can be played on the machine, and communications hardware 4. The software for the machine includes software for controlling the operation of the machine, and communications software.

Reference 5 denotes a computer which can be used for changing the game or at least one of the games which can be played on the machine 1, and could be in the form of an appropriately programmed known form of digital computer.

Hardware in the computer 5 includes communications hardware 6, game storage hardware 7 (in which is stored data relating to a different game or games which could be played on the machine 1) and interrogation hardware 8. For changing the game or at least one of the games which could be played on the machine 1, the computer 5 is connected with the machine 1, for example by means of a local link if the machine and the computer are adjacent one another or by means of a telephone line if they are remote from one another. For changing the game or at least one of the games which could be played on the machine 1, the computer 5 is interrogated from the machine 1 via the link, as shown by the broken line 9, and an interrogation routine is carried out in the computer 5 in the game storage hardware 7 by the interrogation hardware 8 to ascertain what games can be selected from, and what financial returns can be expected for the owner of the machine 1 for each of the games which can be selected, this information being fed back to the machine 1 via the link as shown by the broken line 10. From the machine 1, an order can then be sent via the link for data relating to a selected game or games to be fed from the game storage hardware 7 to the machine 1 to replace data in the game storage hardware 3 relating to an existing game or games, so that the selected game or games can now be played on the machine 1. The computer 5 can be programmed so that, in response to this, it automatically prints for the owner of the machine 1 an invoice for the use of the service provided by the computer 5.

In a modification of the above example, the

machine 1 receives data from the computer 5 via a link computer, the link computer being, for example, at the machine owner's premises, remote from the machine site, and the computer 5 being at a manufacturer's premises. As an extension of this, modification of the machine 1 could be by way of a programmable device brought to the machine, having been previously programmed from the link computer.

10 CLAIMS

1. A method of modifying game characteristics of a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance which includes a computer, the method comprising feeding data from another computer, in which is stored data relating to a game, the method being such that the machine stores data whereby the said game can be played on it.

2. A method according to claim 1, used to change a first game which can be played on the machine, by feeding data from the other computer relating to a game which is different from the first game, whereby instead of data relating to the first game, the machine stores data relating to the different game so that it can be played on the machine.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the other computer stores data relating to a plurality of games, the method comprising selecting one or more of these games and feeding data to the machine relating thereto, whereby the machine stores data relating to the or each selected game, so that the latter can be played on the machine.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the other computer is interrogated for the purpose of selecting one or more games.

5. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein communication between the machine and the other computer is by means of a local connection therebetween, the machine and computer being adjacent one another.

6. A method according to any of claims 1 to 4,

wherein communication between the machine and the other computer is by means of a telephone line or other communication link between the machine and the other computer, the machine and the other computer being remote from one another.

7. A method according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein communication between the machine and the other computer is by means of a telephone line or other communication link between the other computer and a further, link computer and a telephone line or other communication link between the link computer and the machine, the machine, the other computer and/or the link computer being remote from one another.

8. A method according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein communication between the machine and the computer is by means of a programmable device which has received data from a further, link computer which communicates with the said other computer via a telephone line or other communication link, the device being adjacent the machine and the link computer and/or the other computer being remote from the machine.

9. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the machine is a machine of the type in which a plurality of reels bear indicia around their peripheries, stopping of the reels after random rotations with predetermined combinations of symbols in line resulting in wins.

10. A method according to any preceding claims wherein the machine is a machine for playing a game on a video unit.

11. A method of modifying game characteristics of a machine for playing a game of skill and/or chance, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawing.

12. A computer in which is stored data relating to a game, the computer being programmed and adapted for use as the said other computer in a method according to any of the preceding claims.